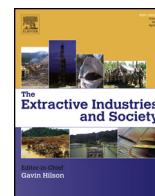


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Governing resources, governing mentalities. Petroleum and the Norwegian integrated ecosystem-based management plan for the Barents and Lofoten seas in 2011



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ABSTRACT

This paper explores how an analytical focus on the governing of resources and mentalities based on the Foucauldian notion of governmentality widens the understanding of political processes relating to the creation of a knowledge-based approach to potentially opening for petroleum extraction in Lofoten, Norway. As pressure intensifies for extractive resource exploitation in the Norwegian Arctic, policy processes are characterized by the construction of governance regimes depending on techno-scientific knowledge upon which political decisions are to be made. Through analyzing the revision of the Integrated Management Plan for the Barents and Lofoten Seas (IMP-BL) in 2011, this paper addresses (i) that the continued construction of a nature/culture divide is an important basis for governance of nature and natural resources, where (ii) the rationale of scientific truth-telling practices are projected onto political processes, which in turn leads to a process of (iii) governing mentalities besides governing actions, and finally (iv) how the creation of a Scientific Forum Report as a basis for the management plan in effect is what Foucault identified as a technology of security, aiming ultimately at securing population, – a technique that reflects a specific power/knowledge nexus that necessitates processes of inclusion and exclusion of knowledge, values and stakeholder views.

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“An analytics of government attempts to show that our taken-for-granted ways of doing things and how we think about and question them are not entirely self-evident or necessary. An analysis of a particular regime of practices (. . .) examines how such a regime gives rise to and depends upon particular forms of knowledge” (Dean, 2010: 31)

1. Introduction

This paper analyses how knowledge production used as a basis for the political process of producing a revised Management plan for the ocean areas of the Barents and Lofoten Seas (Government, 2011) was politicized through the governing of practices of inclusion and exclusion of knowledge into what was called its knowledge base¹,

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¹ This concept is well-known and broadly used by politicians, lobbyists, NGOs, journalists and political commentators and so on when describing the usage of knowledge as basis for political debates and decisions. It was also extensively referred to by researchers and scientists in charge of the process of gathering and presenting the Scientific Forum Report, and its importance as a gate-keeping concept (i.e. a process of governing information flow through a filter between specific cultures of knowledge, here meaning those of science and politics, see discussion in Section 6) was confirmed in a recent telephone interview with the main coordinator of the report, Dr. Cecilie von Quillfeldt, in May 2015.

first and foremost provided in a Scientific Forum Report. This was done, I argue, through processes in which specific institutions are selected as those with the power to decide who delivers relevant knowledge for the establishment of a Scientific Forum Report meant to form a factual basis upon which decisions would be made.

Analytically, I label this a process of managing resources and mentalities, as it exemplifies nicely the theoretical argument that specific ways of governing are closely tied to specific mentalities or ontologies, in the sense that they refer to a specific ordering of the world, as will be presented below. A number of interrelated social science traditions deal with the interrelationship between knowledge, power, networks and politics, such as cultural theory of risks (see for instance Douglas and Wildavsky, 1982), science and technology studies (Jasanoff et al., 1995; Jasanoff, 2004) and actor-network theory (Latour, 1987; Law and Singleton, 2013) – and I will show how a governmentality approach (Foucault, 2008; Dean, 2010) is fruitful in revealing the processes through which specific types of knowledge are included into the power/knowledge nexus supporting the system through which the Norwegian government manages its natural resources.

In the following, a brief introduction to the methodological considerations for the article is discussed before a short section describing the empirical setting, the Lofoten islands in Northern Norway. This presentation is followed by an introduction of the

political controversy concerning the potential petroleum resources in the sea areas just outside the archipelago, before the analysis of the process I have termed the government of resources and mentalities is presented.

2. Data and methodology

The data material for studying the processes leading up to the publication of the revised Management plan is extensive, and thus, I have selected data that serves as an example of how the governing of both resources and ontologies can be analyzed within a governmentality framework.² The analysis in this paper is thus based on the following data sources:

- the Scientific Forum report (von Quillfeldt, 2010) and the revised Management plan for the Barents and Lofoten Seas ([Government, 2011](#)) as well as underlying reports and scientific work;
- participation at a hearing conference after the release of the revised management plan; and
- ethnographic material collected during multiple fieldwork trips to the region from May 2008–August 2011.³

Included in the ethnographic material are the transcripts and notes taken from roughly 50 open ended interviews and conversations with stakeholders in and beyond the region, all involved in and/ or influenced by the process here described and analyzed. In addition, ethnographic field notes *and experiences* constitute an important backdrop for the analysis.⁴

This methodological stance requires a note of clarification. I concur with writers such as [Schatz \(2009\)](#); [Comaroff and Comaroff \(2003\)](#); [Herbert \(2000\)](#) in that political ethnography is concerned both with *method*, characterized typically by fieldwork in which participant observation meaning “. . . the immersion in a community, a cohort, a locale, or a cluster of related subject positions” ([Schatz](#) *ibid*: 5) is important, and with a certain sensibility, “. . . an approach that cares . . .” (*ibid*). What this means, I believe, is to focus on the social and political realities as they are being co-produced in settings in which the ethnographer him/herself is a co-producer – with a particular sensitivity to the rationale present in that same social setting as it is presented by the protagonists; presenting politics as it is produced, understood and interpreted locally. Immersion and sensibility imply a particular (and often personal) connection to the field of study; a connection which enables the researcher to analyze political processes based on an awareness of the social, cultural and political backdrop of the community in question. Thus, [Comaroff and Comaroff](#) write, “(t)he role of (. . . ethnography . . .) has been to show that, even in the act of accommodating to ineluctable macro-cosmic forces, different peoples do things differently, be it because of their distinctive cultures, their social situations, or their will to resist (. . .) The epistemic consequences that follow are plain enough: a committed realism, and a form of relativism that sits uneasily with ‘general’ theory grounded in history, philosophy, political economy . . . (2003*ibid*: 154). The following presentation and analysis

² This process of selection should not be understood as one where only data that serves to support a particular argument has been chosen, but rather that it makes up an example of how the governmentality framework can fruitfully be applied to this sort of decision making processes.

³ In total, an estimated period of about eight months was spent in field during this period, dispersed over more than fifteen fieldwork trips.

⁴ The data material was collected as part of my PhD work ([Dale, 2011](#)), financed through the research project IPY GAPS: The Impacts of Oil and Gas Activity on Peoples in the Arctic. The overall findings of the project will be presented in the forthcoming Springer anthology “From Pole to Pole: Polar Environmental Research during the International Polar Year 2007–2009, edited by Susan Barr, Guido di Prisco, David Walton and Roland Kallenborn.

aims to show that there are different ways of understanding knowledge, values, responsibilities and concerns that deserve to be presented, analyzed and included in the debates concerning the management of natural resources. What I have learned during my time in the Lofoten region will thus be instrumental to the way I analyze and interpret the processes much like local actors and stakeholders do.

3. Backdrop: Where are we?

The Lofoten islands, situated at 67 degrees north – just above the Arctic circle – have for centuries been an essential area for income and resource management, – for state and citizens alike. The state has over centuries earned revenues from fisheries in this region that far surpass those of the latest decades from the petroleum industry. Merchants and traders have prospered, and fishers have earned a living. Annually, up to 40,000 fishers (more than double the resident population) would come to fish during the winter season when the North Atlantic cod enters the waters outside Lofoten to spawn. It could well be argued that the fisheries in Lofoten has served as the birthplace of both monetary wealth and stories, tales and mythologies that has helped shape a coastal identity that remains important for many Norwegian coastal communities. But the Lofoten region has also been subject to the relentless varieties of nature, and at times been both conflict and poverty ridden, – bankruptcies and personal failure could easily follow success and wealth, as the cod could simply fail to appear, or arrive in much smaller numbers than anticipated. Therefore, the regulation of the fishery resource – and of those who wanted to utilize it – started early; indeed, in an amendment to one of the first Norwegian laws written, the *Frostatingslov* from the 11th century, the fisheries of Lofoten were already regulated, and in 1816, a separate law concerning fisheries in the Lofoten seas was established, regulating through managing sea plots, fishnet direction and type of fishing gear. Also, the rights to trade on – and collect taxes from – this lucrative business was controlled by the state; many in fact argue that the very urge to gather the old Norwegian smaller kingdoms under one rule in the 10th Century came from a need to control trade and taxation in the north, and in particular the fish trade emanating from Lofoten ([Jaklin, 2006](#); [Jensen, 2012](#)).

Today, Lofoten consists of six municipalities, and a majority of the population lives mostly in and in close proximity to the two small towns of Svolvær and Leknes, in addition to around thirty small fishing villages. The number of fishers and fish traders has declined rapidly the last two decades, and thus the relative importance of other trades and sources of income has risen substantially, in effect creating a more versatile and fluid labour market, again particularly in the larger communities and towns. However, the challenges typical for regions in the outskirts of things are also found in Lofoten; a declining and aging population (although in recent years a small increase has actually been observed) due to low birth rates and young adult outmigration, a lack of infrastructure investment enabling business to compete with more centrally positioned competitors, a chronic scarcity of risk capital and relatively scarce municipal finances meant to ensure that basic needs and services are provided for inhabitants.

It is in this setting the question of petroleum development and the potential benefits it could bring to coastal communities was introduced, and although the matter had been debated on and off for at least two decades before, the issue became a political hot topic only after the release of the first management plan for the Barents and Lofoten seas in 2006 – and reached a heated peak during the revision process of this plan from 2008 to 2011. Based on the political developments up to 2015, however, one can with almost complete certainty claim that the debate will continue also

up until the elections of 2017, and that Norwegian high north politics seems almost destined, every once in a while, to “look to Lofoten”.

4. Lofoten and petroleum in national politics 2001–2017

In September 2013, the new Prime Minister of Norway, Mrs Erna Solberg, presented an agreement between four political parties, which would constitute the parliamentary basis for a new Norwegian cabinet. One of the political bargains her Conservative Party had to succumb to in order to get this platform settled, was a postponement on the petroleum issue concerning the Lofoten, Vesterålen and Senja regions (abbr. LoVeSe) of Northern Norway was to be postponed until after the parliamentary period was over—that is, until the year 2017, an absolute demand from the two smaller parties supporting the new cabinet. With this decision, the new Solberg cabinet continued a political strategy that has kept the decision of how to strategically plan for future development in this area at bay since 2001.

In the period after the general elections in 2013, Norwegian petroleum has met with at least two severe challenges beyond their control. One is the sudden and somewhat unforeseen plummeting of oil prices in 2014— a price fall that has revealed to its full extent the dependency of the Norwegian economy on petroleum⁵; the other the climate change conference in Paris in December 2015 and the pressing need for politicians to show their ability to act on climate change. These two overarching processes has led to a reified notion of urgency in both proponents and opponents to petroleum development in the LoVeSe region; opponents are urging for a permanent ban on all petroleum development, whilst the petroleum sector and their supporters argue that the best prospects available – first amongst them LoVeSe – should be made available as soon as possible.

The wait has indeed been long, they argue. In 2001, the first cabinet of former Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg issued a stop order on test drilling in the area, due to a combination of political pressure and scientifically based concerns on the fragility of the marine areas and its ecosystems; an area where a substantial part of the total amount of fish Norway catches spawns (Fiskeridir-ektoratet, 2013). The following Bondevik II cabinet issued what in hindsight is seen as the basis for the now well-established Norwegian high north strategy (Norway, 2001), a strategy that lay the foundations for an ecosystem-based approach to management of sea areas and resources (Dale, 2011; Misund and Olsen, 2013). In 2006, the first ecosystem based management plan for the Barents and Lofoten seas was released. The plan presented the complexities of multi-user needs and concerns together with a realization of a lack of knowledge about what was considered fragile ecosystems. These concerns pushed the government to initiate processes aiming at filling knowledge gaps (Knol, 2010) and ensuring stakeholder and actor participation and co-management rights (Olsen, et al., 2007a,b; Johnsen, Hersoug et al., 2014: 7).

The complex balancing act of both ensuring actor participation rights and a (scientific) knowledge-based approach where the well-being of ecosystems was highlighted proved a difficult political challenge for the Norwegian authorities. I will here argue that an analysis of to what extent the decision making processes here presented are understood as inclusive and participatory by a broad range of stakeholders is important, and further, that an analysis of the principles of governance as (a) governmentality can

shed further light on how natural resources are managed and governed. Before the analysis I will describe the main arguments of this analytical perspective.

5. Understanding governance as governmentality

In general, governance simply means «to govern», in other words, it can cover all patterns of rule, all systems of government. More specifically though, governance is identified as a type of government where the state is dependent upon others or where the state plays a minor or no role, and signifies specific changes in the role of the state as provider of security and well-being for its citizens, – processes such as the public sector reforms in 1980s and 1990s called New Public Management or The Third Way (Giddens, 1998; Bevir, 2009: 9–11). In such processes, focus was diverted from the hierarchical bureaucracy as basis for policy definition and implementation and to markets, quasi-markets and stakeholder networks. In other words, liberalization and privatization meant that services formerly provided by the state now could be provided by others. Thus actors both within and beyond the state itself was provided the right to participate in decision making processes and in decision making networks.

This means that the state still is important, but now more as a facilitator of processes and the conducting actor, ensuring implementation; its role more being to steer and facilitate for stakeholders instead of issuing commands (Kooiman 1999: 73). This transfer of power to networks did not, however, render the state with less power, as it still facilitates and to a large extent holds the power to decide the basis for inclusion (and exclusion) of actors, meanings, knowledges and sentiments in decision making processes. Importantly, «knowledge» is a major provider of legitimacy – and thus provides the power to plan, to decide – and to rule. In other words, «knowledge» constitutes a rationale for a governmentality upon which governance – the act of governing through facilitating for and participating in networks – is based.

Governance processes often display an unrealistic goal of reaching *real* co-management and stakeholder influence. The reasons for this are many – and may vary across scales – here only a few, general points will be mentioned:

- *There is a lack of attention to the complexity and multiplicity of «risk society» challenges (Beck, 1992; Bäckstrand, 2003; Lupton, 2006; Mythen and Walklate, 2006):* That is, a belief that the complex puzzle of a multiple risks and challenges in (the post-modern, post-industrial) society can be solved one piece at a time; in one sector after the other, and that, when cross-sectoral initiatives are made – as with the ecosystem-based management plan – the hierarchical relationship between these sectors becomes apparent in that the interest and/ or world views of one tend to outperform another;
- *The processes often ignores the role and power of expertise in de facto excluding others:* The focus on scientifically based knowledge and logics necessarily excludes groups, viewpoints and types of knowledge deemed «unscientific» or «based on emotions or idealism», in addition to all those who are unable to understand the tribal language of techno-scientific reasoning (Douglas and Wildavsky, 1982, Jasanoff, 1990; Bäckstrand, 2003; Jentoft, 2006). In addition, it is underestimated that politics very often sets the parameters for science that is to be used for management – they seek applicable knowledge; i.e. knowledge that can be used as basis for politics –; and
- *Governance processes seeks to adhere to democratic principles (often, in fact, democracy is seen as a prerequisite for governance processes to be successful) while resting on a relation between scientific knowledge production and politics where the question of accountability is unresolved.* As Mark Bevir has shown, “. . . (t)

⁵ The fall in prices continued well into 2015, seeing prices as low as US 41 per barrel for WTI Crude, and Brent at US 48 on August 20th, 2015. Source: <http://multimedia.dn.no/nyheter/energi/2015/08/20/0737/Oljepris/ny-bunn-for-oljepri-sene>, accessed August 30th, 2015.

he new governance sits oddly beside the ideal of representative and responsible government in accordance with the will of the majority” (Bevir, 2009: 27). This illustrates the curious relationship between governance as method for policy construction and implementation and its apparent lack of accountability schemes replacing or supporting the traditional relationship between politicians, public servants and the (voting) public (ibid: 25–26).

These critical points are backdrops for a focus on how governance processes can be understood as a *governmentality* (that is, as a *governing of mentalities*), a concept derived from Foucault (2007, 2008, 2010). This is a concept with a broad appeal across a variety of disciplines. Michell Dean suggests it should primarily be seen as a *critical analytical approach* which “. . . engages in the restive interrogation of what is taken as given” (Dean 2010: 3), and thus as an analytics of political practice which seeks to unravel the ideas, the ideologies, the rationale behind politics.

In an often quoted passage from his lecture on February 1st, 1978 at the College de France, Foucault defined governmentality as being three things, the first being “. . . the ensemble of institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific, albeit very complex, power that has the population as its target, *political economy as its major form of knowledge* (my emphasis), and apparatuses of security as its essential technical instrument” (Foucault 2007: 108). Political economy is here seen as the rationale within which interactions between political institutions, managerial systems and economics are understood. Marlow (2002) has suggested that an analytics of government should focus on “. . . forms of governmental thought, realms and frames of assumed knowledge, particular tacit rationalities and logics, means of calculation and strategies . . . (Marlow op.cit: 244)” – a suggestion that does not *exclude* types of governmentality other than that of liberalism, but rather opens for an analysis of the “. . . programmatic claims of liberalism” (ibid: 9) of freedom and individual right to self-governance is part of a regime of government which has as its ultimate aim the securing of populations. Therefore, an analytics of government (which includes government of self, a necessary aspect of freedom) will ultimately be involved in the quest for how particular notions of ‘truth’ are constructed.

One such pool of “truths” comes from economics. In research adhering to notions of governmentality, economics is to be regarded analytically as a tool of governance, but is just as often found to be the knowledge system that defines the very rationale of governance. In short, what pays of economically will often prevail. This particular power/knowledge nexus – the objectified logics of scientifically based politics coupled with an economic rationality – is in a governmentality approach understood through an analysis of processes of knowledge production, both within the accepted realm of science and beyond. Hence, the inclusion/exclusion criteria and the power to define them are important objects of analysis.

Another pool of “truths” is produced by science, and relevant for this discussion is the way the management of offshore resources in Northern Norway is based on the premise that the progress of scientific know-how will improve our ability to both protect the environment *and* exploit the resources of the area – a premise that constitutes the boundary of a particular ‘culture of knowledge’, or what Michell Dean calls “a regime of practices”:

“. . . a relatively stable field of correlation of visibilities, mentalities, technologies and agencies, that constitute a kind of taken-for-granted point of reference for any form of problematization”. (Dean 2010: 37)

One example of such a regime of practices, I claim, is the Norwegian Management regime of natural resources and ecosystems. In order to study this regime *as politics* it is not sufficient to study who participates, what is said and what decisions are being made. Instead there is a need for a focus on how it is a part of a set of technologies aiming towards establishing and re-establishing regimes of truth where the state as a political actor is enabled as security provider, where an effect of this is the way these same processes also creates *insecurity* within population, because peoples own postulates as to what secures them are excluded from the political decision processes. One therefore runs the risk of alienating individuals and communities because of a political ambition of adhering to an ideal of governance dominated by a culture of specialists within specific knowledge fields - like ecosystem sustainability, petroleum politics, geopolitics and liberalist economics - identified in national High North strategies as being of particular importance for state politics.

Below I will use the theoretical framework that I have presented in an analysis of how the inclusion and exclusion of different knowledges in fact constitutes a process of *governing mentalities* just as much as *governing actions*, as it reifies a notion of “truth” largely based on scientific criteria.

6. The governing of resources and mentalities

In April 2010, a scientific report was published (von Quillfeldt, 2010a,b) with contributions from a Scientific Forum, a Risk analysis group and a Monitoring group These were experts nominated by institutional stakeholders named by the Norwegian government who was to report back to policy makers on the state of the ecosystems of the area and give advice on how to manage them. The aim of this report was to lay the foundation for a revision of the Management plan for the Barents and Lofoten Seas. Most of the 300+ pages document is concerned with current status of plant species -, fish- and marine mammal stocks and the interdependencies of the ecosystems within which they all belong. Included in the marine ecosystem monitoring are the most important effects of different kinds of human activities. The Barents Sea is identified – both in this report and elsewhere (AMAP 2002; ACIA 2005; AMAP 2009) – as an ‘early warning area’ concerning the effects of climate change, long-range pollution and accumulation of persistent toxic pollutants in ecosystem food chains where humans reign on top. In this regard, the report can be seen first and foremost as being a state-of-science-on-the-environment assessment and was not meant to be backing specific arguments in the political debate concerning petroleum. Still, it has had a major influence on how politics concerning the areas is conducted.

The report was presented at a press conference where most of the allotted time was used to describe the condition of the natural habitats of the management area, focusing explicitly on the knowledge production that had been initiated by the previous evaluation of the management plan of 2006. In particular, the findings from two major scientific programs, in which the seabed and oceanic and seabird populations of the region were mapped and assessed, were thoroughly presented.⁶ Most importantly for our purpose is the ramifications these assessments have for the evaluation of particular valuable and vulnerable areas closed for petroleum activity in the previous management plan of 2006 outside the LoVeSe area. The conditions under which these assessments are made are the result of pressure from both political, economic and environmental interests - which are not necessarily

⁶ See <http://www.seapop.no/no/about/> and http://www.mareano.no/om_mareano for a presentation of the main findings of these programmes. Accessed June 5th, 2014.

easier to meet by simply adding more (and other types of) knowledge to the equation (Knol 2010: 62). As such, the report should only be regarded as *part of* the needed basis for a political decision, as it *does not* include important elements concerning how people are enabled (or ‘un-abled’) to live their lives locally as a result of national political decisions.

It is important for the analysis here to emphasize the significance in maintaining a stringent divide between what is the scientific basis for the process – consistently referred to as the “factual” basis for the Management plan – and the participatory governance process, in which a number of actors and stakeholders were given their chance to influence the decision making process.⁷ The *gatekeepers* of the Scientific Forum, the institutions that were given the role as knowledge providers to the Forum report ensured that the report would act as a *boundary object* (Star and Griesemer, 1989) carrying

“... different meanings in different worlds but their structure is common enough to more than one world to make them recognizable, a means of translation. The creation and management of boundary objects is a key process in developing and maintaining coherence across intersecting social worlds” (ibid: 393),

acting as both a marker and a translator between the realms of science and politics. An important aspect of the argument presented here is that within a specific governmentality – one where techno-scientific knowledge dominates the power/ knowledge nexus of politics – the importance of being included in the knowledge base which ultimately will be seen as the “factual basis” for the political discussions to follow cannot be underestimated, as one would be seen as a provider of “truth”, not as a stakeholder with either economic, ideological, social or cultural motive for political action.

The construction of this knowledge-base for an ecosystem-based management scheme informing political decisions concerning the marine areas off the North-Norwegian coast has had a major influence on the debate concerning potential development of the petroleum resources believed to be located in the waters outside LoVeSe. The assumption behind this analysis is that this regime of political practice is reaffirmed through two processes. The first pertains to the *inclusion and exclusion* of what is considered to be relevant knowledge, perspectives and actors. The second relates to the process through which the aim of scientific and political consensus is pursued. Here, questions concerning society’s relation to nature and how to manage, control and utilize it become paramount. Following Mary Douglas, the analysis reflects how

“... the consequence of using science as a basis for politics is that both sides consult their own scientific experts” (Douglas, 1992),

a point which contrary to popular and political belief seems to render science *unable to enable* politics, and that *complementary* policy advice from *outside* of the power/knowledge nexus in which scientific principles rules is increasingly important, but not *within* the particular governmentality of Norwegian offshore resources called an *ecosystem-based management scheme*.⁸

The build-up to the release of the report had been massive, and to a large degree based on the expectations of the proponents and opponents of petroleum production in LoVeSe. Even though it had been stressed for months before that the report would not come up with a definitive answer to the question and that advocates for the many other concerns – environmental, industrial, developmental and so on – had tried to make their cases heard, it was the matter of petroleum which overshadowed most other concerns. I will therefore briefly describe to what extent the Forum report deals with the petroleum issue, and analyze to what extent the gate-keeping – qualities of the report are maintained also here; in other word, to what extent economic concerns about the availability of these areas for petroleum development is influential in the report.

Initially, petroleum production is described as just one of several human activities impacting the state of the ecosystems in the area. In Chapter 3.1, the interest from the petroleum industry for access to areas in the management area is described as profound (von Quillfeldt, 2010: 36). Initially, the chapter focuses on the assessment of undiscovered petroleum resources in the area, which are thought to amount to about 30 per cent of the remaining resources yet to be discovered on the Norwegian shelf (von Quillfeldt, 2010: 36).⁹ Reference to governmental policies within the petroleum sector indicates however that the long-term utilization of the area is necessary, if Norway is to maintain its expected level of production (and thus a steady flow of income for the state) as described in government economic strategy plans (Norway, 2009). In other words: inscribed as part of the *rationale* for a management plan for the area is the long-term political goal of maintaining a high level of activity on the Norwegian petroleum shelf, an activity level which (as seen by the industry) presupposes access to the undiscovered resources in the area. Therefore, it is important to note that even if the management plan is intended to be a plan for an environmental policy for the sea areas in question, its findings will also have possible ramifications for national economy, for geopolitical strategies and for the future of the Norwegian petroleum state. It is intriguing to find that one in the Scientific Forum Report – on the scientific state-of-things concerning the management of resources and ecosystems – finds it pertinent to present arguments for why it would be in the interest of us all to open for petroleum activities in the area (ibid: 37). I argue here that these arguments in essence have little to do with how to secure an ecosystem based management of the area, and is a finding based on the analytical approach of seeking to understand the governing of mentalities, reifying a notion of a specific power/knowledge nexus influencing also the production of knowledge.

Besides arguing for the inclusion of petroleum resources as part of an ecosystem-based management report, it is the assessment of risks involved in potentially utilizing them that is given the main focus when discussing petroleum activities in the area. Details about allowed minimum for produced water, emulsion mud, drilling fluids and so on during ‘normal activities’ (defined as “everything except occurrences of unintended emissions” (ibid)) are listed, as well as requirements for oil spill preparedness in case of unintended occurrences. The report lists existing production activity in the South Barents Sea, with a primary focus on the productivity and potential production outcome of the wells drilled as well as a brief description of search drillings and relief wells, before describing the gathering of seismic data by the Norwegian Petroleum Directorate (OD) in 2007–2009 – a process that spurred

⁷ Telephone interview, von Quillfeldt, op.cit.

⁸ In fact, in the case at hand, popular sentiments and alternative ways of understanding the relationship between the value of ecosystems, natural resources and extractive resources has influenced national policy, as it has been the most important basis for a political alternative to the strong national narrative of consensus and co-existence between petroleum, fisheries and environmental protection as a pathway not only possible *but* also as the morally and politically correct thing to do. For a more thorough discussion of these matters, see Dale (2011) and Kristoffersen and Dale (2014).

⁹ The figure in this report is based on information issued by the Norwegian Petroleum Directorate (NPD) before their analysis of seismic data acquired in the Lofoten and Vesterålen Sea areas in 2007–2009, figures that were issued in a separate NPD-report the day after the report from the Scientific Forum was released.

considerable controversies and reactions from local fishers and other local actors as well as environmentalists and 'green-labelled' politicians nationally. Again, it is interesting to note how commercial production of petroleum is matter-of-factly inscribed in the report as an undisputed part of an ecosystem-based management scheme, for instance seen in statements like "(. . .) the seismic data material is considered to be sufficient for the necessary scientific evaluation of possibilities for petroleum to be made, which in turn will strengthen the basis for a new updated management plan" (ibid: 40).

Many have argued that the need for knowledge about *how to manage the ecosystems* of the region should not – in principle – include assessments of amounts of hydrocarbons beneath the ocean floor. It is therefore interesting to note that out of the approximately NOK 500 million spent on 'increasing the knowledge base' for a new management plan, NOK 400 million was spent on the gathering of seismic data, i.e. data that does not add knowledge about the possible consequences of human activities to the marine ecosystems – only the potential for finding hydrocarbons – and instead potentially stirs resentment to and produce questions concerning the aim of the ecosystem-based management plan. For what might it cost us to protect an area against the risks petroleum development might represent?

What is interesting is that this knowledge, pertaining to the possibility that there might potentially be petroleum in the areas, is included as important knowledge to consider when managing the areas with a particular focus on ecosystems. In other words – the economic potential it represents is seen as information belonging to the basis upon which decisions about ecosystem management is to be based. This expert produced, techno-scientific knowledge – indicating economic potential – is therefore included, again concurrent with the reigning power/knowledge nexus of Norwegian resource management. Local concerns to the contrary – that is, to what extent the potential for petroleum development might threaten the possibility for development of other economic sectors and potentially degrades quality of life is not as easily argued for within the knowledge gathering process, but is defined as political, or ideological, arguments.

7. The hearing conference

In June 2010, approximately 250 delegates participated at a hearing conference in Svolvær, Lofoten, where the revision of the Integrated Management Plan for the Barents and Lofoten seas was on the agenda (abbr. IMP-BL). This conference is a representative example of a series of events in which the Forum report was discussed, and the inclusion and exclusion premises for what is seen to constitute the *factual basis* for the political decision to be made the were reconfirmed and re-established.

The Minister of the Environment at the time, Mr. Erik Solheim, opened the conference by acknowledging what he perceived of as a particular strength of Norwegian management practices, that people with different opinions can join in and discuss the issue at hand, and that a *knowledge-based debate* ensures that we achieve the best possible result. In particular, he was proud that the ecosystem was in focus when discussing management, and that every possible influence on its well-being would be taken into account. He also proclaimed that the report showed clearly which areas was in need of special care and protection. His speech was heavily based on a trust in science's ability to map, assess, evaluate – and conclude with a high level of certainty. Thus, he emphasized trust as an important inclusion/ exclusion criteria and as the preferable basis for the debate to follow.

Minister Lisbet Berg Hansen, in charge of fishery politics and coastal matters, spoke of the importance of the foodstuff we harvest from the sea, its position in the international market place, and that

the scientific knowledge about biological life was valuable if we are to manage our marine wealth in the best possible way. She emphasized the role of the state as a provider of welfare and security, and its need for adequate mapping, surveillance and scientific assessments in order to enable policy makers to make the best possible decisions. According to the Minister, it is up to the state to ensure the viability of life at sea and the continued viability of local communities, through national policies that arrange for continue growth and commercial success within parameters set by an active resource management scheme. This includes the Norwegian petroleum sector. In her statement the minister thus adhered to the advancement of a politics of truth resting on establishing the necessary framework within which people manage themselves.

Finally, the Minister for petroleum, Mr. Terje Riis Johansen stepped up to the podium, extending his gratitude to the researchers and bureaucrats for their "collection and systematizing" of knowledge as basis for the work ahead. For petroleum, the work done mirrored the important aspect, said the Minister, that under normal circumstances, the effect of petroleum production on oceanic ecosystems is perceived as a low risk activity. The management of resources in Norwegian waters is based on co-existence, he continued, where there should be a place also for petroleum – "where we want it". He argued that the Norwegian experience concerning risk management has been a success, but did remind the audience that things had changed after the Deepwater Horizon-accident in the Mexican Gulf that same spring. Extreme events will potentially influence national policies on allocation of petroleum fields, he said. He noted that extreme events may have extreme effects which in turn will have a influence on how we define risk levels.

The conference had been awaited with anticipation, and seen as a possibility for local stakeholders to be heard, to take part, – but something curious happened: In the hall, at least two dozen local people were present whom I knew from my fieldwork experiences had strong opinions on the matter and who rarely hesitated to speak their mind. However, in this setting, only one of them commented on the lack of inclusion of local knowledge about the ecosystems described in the report. He was a local fisherman who pointed out that he did not recognize the simulations in the report of how an oil spill in LoVeSe would spread. He referred to his 20 years of experience with ocean currents and claimed that the model could not possibly account for local current conditions. He feared that a potential oil spill would spread far beyond the area that the models that the Norwegian Veritas (DNV) presented in the report. The representative from DNV acknowledged and admitted that while the models were the most advanced to date, they still did not have the capacity to include the complexities of local currents in this region. Thus, it was admitted, local knowledge could indeed be seen to be very relevant for decisions to be made concerning oil spill prevention, but was, for technical and methodological reasons not included in the models presented. This effectively excluded local knowledge as a basis for the revision of the management plan – knowledge that admittedly could have been of importance for risk assessments and ultimately for political decision making.

As days and weeks passed, a comment made to me by a local business man on our way out of the conference was repeated by a surprisingly high number of otherwise wordy and strong headed stakeholders –

*"There was nothing more to say. The ministers closed the doors on all the things I thought was important."*¹⁰

Without suggesting a deliberate exclusion of local voices from the meeting, I will argue that the presence of no less than three

¹⁰ Personal communication, private business owner, Lofoten, June 8, 2010.

Cabinet members accentuated a framing of the debate within a specific power/ knowledge nexus that left little room for non-scientific valuations of nature, landscapes and resources beyond those that can be objectively accounted for in capitalization value. In particular, all three ministers explicitly associated themselves with a political regime of practices that sets parameters on *what knowledge is to be taken seriously*. Typically arguing within the rationale of a neoliberalist governmentality (Marlow, 2002; Elden, 2007; Hamann, 2009; Dean, 2010), the ministers all upheld the production of scientific knowledge and a connection to the logics of the market (Foucault, 2007) as imperative for the decision which was to be made on matters of management of resources (including a decision on whether to continue to define the sea areas outside Lofoten, Vesterålen and Senja as in need of special protection for also the next management plan period). When Minister Solheim referred to “a knowledge-based debate”, the knowledge he spoke of was heavily based on a trust in science’s ability to map, assess, evaluate – and conclude with a high level of certainty. Thus, he emphasized trust in science as an important inclusion/ exclusion criteria (Foucault, 2007; Dean, 2010) and as the preferable basis for the debate to follow. Minister Berg Hansen, in charge of fishery politics and coastal matters in the cabinet, spoke of the importance of the foodstuff we harvest from the sea, its position in the international market place, and that the scientific knowledge we can obtain about biological life was valuable if we are to manage our wealth at sea in the best possible way. She emphasized the role of the state as provider of welfare and security, and its need for adequate mapping, surveillance and scientific assessments in order to enable policy makers to make the best possible decisions. And finally, the Minister in charge of petroleum politics, Mr. Riis Johansen made explicit the relation between threats and possibilities typical for a technology of management of contingency based on a scientific calculation of risks and possibilities, and that petroleum not only could but should be a part of the equation, because the benefits are so large that they justify taking the risk.

I will argue that this analysis in fact reveals a paradoxical anti-democratic virtue of the power/knowledge nexus here described. In the words of Shelia Jasanoff,

“we regard a particular factual claim as true not because it accurately reflects what is out there in nature, but because it has been certified as true by those who are considered competent to pass upon the truth and falsify on that kind of claim”. (Jasanoff, 1990: 13)

It is worth mentioning – as we are discussing to what extent the ideals of governance of co-operation and co-management actually means that different voices, different ontologies has influence – that *none* of the written hearing statements, *nor* the comments from the few who were given the opportunity to speak were included in the final version of the report, the *de facto* main knowledge base upon which the political decision (i.e. the acceptance of the management plan by the Norwegian parliament) was taken. The presence of these hearing statements on the government web simply underlines this point; they are included in *the process*, but not in the final product, and thus not acknowledged *as knowledge*.¹¹

8. Summary and conclusion: The management process as a technology of security

With the implementation of a new, revised Management Plan for the Barents and Lofoten seas (IMP-BL) a specific process in

which a particular synthesis between power and knowledge – a specific *governmentality* – is re-established. I argue that the management plan regime is a *technology of security* (Foucault, 2007), as it is designed as a tool of governance based on a specific governmentality, that of the coupling of (objectifiable) science and a (neo) liberalist rationality – a tool meant to secure population through managing resources. Questions about whether or not to open for petroleum activities are thus answered by following the criteria developed within the ruling power/knowledge nexus of management of resources, as described in the foreword of the most recent edition of the plan:

“The purpose of this management plan is to arrange for wealth creation through a sustainable usage of resources and goods in the Barents Sea and the sea areas outside Lofoten, while simultaneously upholding the structure, function, productivity and diversity of the ecosystems. The management plan is thus a tool both for preparing for wealth creation and for maintaining the environmental values of the sea.” (Norway, 2011: 6)¹²

With this tool – or technology – resources are mapped and presented and thus naturalized as part of the state management regime. Further, risks are analyzed and future possibilities objectified and made coherent with a linear understanding of progress and economic development. In this, the frontier landscape of the north – clean, unspoiled, wild and primitive – is presented with all its opportunities for development and exploitation, but also as a place in which human activities are accepted as being potentially problematic in terms of ecosystem maintenance. The fact that three ministers were present at the hearing conference for the Forum Report – which provided the “factual basis” upon which the Management Plan was built – in itself accentuated a framing of the debate representing the ruling power/ knowledge nexus of managing resources in Norway. All three ministers explicitly associated themselves with a political regime of practices that sets parameters on *what knowledge is to be taken seriously*, and they all upheld *the production of scientific knowledge* and a connection to the *logics of the market* as imperative for the decision which was to be made on matters of management of resources in the integrated management plan.

It all leads to the matter of scientific, seemingly objective authority, a matter in which most people are simply excluded from being a qualified critique of the objectified knowledge presented. Sheila Jasanoff writes: “When an area of intellectual activity is tagged with the label “science”, people who are not scientists are *de facto* barred from having a say about its substance; correspondingly, to label something “not science” is to denude it of cognitive authority” (ibid: 14)

Producing science is no objective task though, and the example provided in this paper illustrates the extent of which the governing of mentalities influences how and what knowledge is included – and excluded – when governing resources, – a governmentality based on a specific power/knowledge relation between the governmental rationality of liberalism and objectivist science (Dean, 2010). The processes here described show that a combination of Gregory Batesons plea for a focus of possible alternatives to the way things are ruled and managed (Bateson, (1971): 286 and the Foucauldian focus on the margins of society – on the manifestations of the governmental processes in local (community or individual) lives – opens for an analytics of experience-based knowledge and why they should matter to politics regarding whether to start petroleum development in the Lofoten area. The case also highlights the way different knowledge systems are – under the dominant techno-scientific governmentality –

¹¹ See <http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/kld/dok/hoeringer/hoeringsdok/2010/hoering--oppdatering-av-forvaltningsplan/hoeringsuttalelser.html?id=601948>), accessed September 9th, 2015.

¹² Author’s translation from the Norwegian original plan document.

hierarchically defined, and thus serves to strengthen the argument that knowledge is indeed produced and never “ . . . exists in a pure state, fully formed, merely awaiting its application in particular places (Nadasdy 2011: 130). The argument here, thus, has been one supporting the need for analysis of the governmentality that supports presuppositions of absolute truth revealed through scientific methods and processes and the power/knowledge nexus it reifies.

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